



**Daf
Hashavua**

24 August 2019
Shabbat ends

23 Av 5779
London 8.55pm
Jerusalem 7.51pm

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Eikev עֵקֶב

Artscroll p.980 | Haftarah p.1197
Hertz p.780 | Haftarah p.794
Soncino p.1032 | Haftarah p.1051

Shabbat Mevarechim. Rosh Chodesh Elul is next Shabbat and Sunday

In loving memory of Shalom ben Pinchas



“Take care lest you forget the Lord, your God,... lest you eat and be satisfied, and you build good houses and settle, and your cattle and sheep and goats increase, and you increase silver and gold for yourselves, and everything you have will increase – and your heart will become haughty and you will forget the Lord, your God, Who took you out of the land of Egypt from the house of slavery” (Devarim 8:11-14).

Sidrah Summary: Eikev

1st Aliya (Kohen) – Devarim 7:12-9:10

Moshe encourages the Israelites to keep God's commandments. This will allow them to prosper in the Land and to be the most blessed of peoples. In the same way that God took them out of Egypt, so too He will allow them to defeat the Cana'anite nations. The nation must destroy the Cana'anites' idols. Moshe entreats the Israelites to remember the 40 years in the desert, including the eating of the manna. God will bring them into a Land with abundant resources, where they will lack nothing.

Question: *What special miracle occurred with the nation's clothing during the 40 years in the desert? (8:4). Answer on pg.6.*

Point to Consider: *Which mitzvah is derived from 8:10?*

2nd Aliya (Levi) – 8:11-9:3

Moshe warns the Israelites not to forget God once they enter the Land. They should not fall into the trap of thinking that they inherited the Land thanks to their own efforts and merits; rather it was God who guided and protected them during the years in the desert. Failure to heed this lesson will result in exile from the Land.

3rd Aliya (Shlishi) – 9:4-9:29

The Israelites should remember that they are a "stiff-necked people" and they are not inheriting the Land because of their own righteousness. In fact, since leaving Egypt, they repeatedly provoked God, initially with the sin of the golden calf, which Moshe now recalls in detail. He also reminds them of the sin of the spies.

4th Aliya (Revi'i) – 10:1-11

Moshe describes how he carved two new stone tablets, having broken the first set upon seeing the worship of the golden calf when descending Mount Sinai. In the aftermath of the golden calf, the tribe of Levi was set apart for its special functions of guarding the Ark and serving God.

5th Aliya (Chamishi) – 10:12-11:9

Moshe urges the Israelites to fear and love God and to open their hearts to Him. Moshe recalls the miraculous Exodus from Egypt, the splitting of the Sea of Reeds and the earth swallowing Korach and his rebels.

6th Aliya (Shishi) – 11:10-21

Moshe goes on to say that God always has "His eyes" on the Land of Canaan. He then tells them a passage which we recite twice daily as the second paragraph of the *Shema* (see green siddur, p.68). It spells out the benefits of fulfilling the commandments and the consequences of neglecting them. The mitzvot of tefilin, mezuzah and studying Torah are stated (see p.3 article).

7th Aliya (Shevi'i) – 11:22-25

Moshe urges the people to remember their Torah learning and to have a connection with Torah scholars (see Rashi).

Haftarah

Taken from the book of Yeshaya, this is the second of the seven 'haftarot of consolation' read after Tisha B'Av. Just like a mother does not forget the child of her womb, so too God will never forget the Jews and will avenge those nations who have persecuted them. Yeshaya famously calls upon the Jews to be a "light unto the nations".



United Synagogue Daf Hashavua

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The Power of Mezuzah

by Rabbi oni Golker, Assistant Rabbi, St John's Wood Synagogue



The mitzvah of mezuzah is mentioned in this week's sidrah: "And you shall write them on the doorposts of your homes and your gates" (Devarim 11:20).

The mezuzah stands like a sentinel at the door. It contains one of the Torah's most powerful passages: "Hear [*Shema*] O Israel: the Lord is our God; the Lord is One". These words encapsulate the most fundamental assertion of what it means to be a Jew – belief in monotheism.

Yet the mezuzah is not only a symbolic declaration of our faith; it is also a sign of God's watchful care. The Name of God, *Sha-dai*, appearing on the reverse side of the parchment, is an acronym for the Hebrew words which mean, "Guardian of the doorways of Israel".

The mezuzah is placed at an angle, with the top of the mezuzah inclined towards the inside of the room, and the bottom towards the outside. Rabbi Yaakov ben Asher (known as the Tur, 1269-1340) explains this by citing two conflicting opinions about how the mezuzah should be positioned. He first quotes Rashi (1040-1105), who held that it should be placed vertically. He then cites the view of Rashi's grandson, Rabbi Yaakov ben Meir (known as Rabbeinu Tam 1100-1171), who maintained that placing the mezuzah in a 'standing' position is not respectful; it should rather be positioned horizontally, in a manner similar to how the Tablets of the Covenant were placed in the Ark (*Aron*) in the Temple. The Tur concludes that those who are careful to perform mitzvot in the best way should fulfil both opinions by placing their mezuzot at an angle.

On a deeper level, this decision represents compromise – adopting the middle ground. Compromise is regarded as an essential

ingredient for ensuring peace within our homes, and the positioning of the mezuzah serves as a constant reminder.

The Talmud (Avodah Zarah 11a) relates a story about the mezuzah's protection which we referred to above. It concerns Onkelos, who converted to Judaism and wrote the authoritative Aramaic translation of the Torah. The Roman Emperor, who was Onkelos' uncle, sent soldiers to arrest him for defying the state religion. Onkelos drew them into a discussion about the Torah and succeeded in converting them to his new faith. Caesar then sent a second group of soldiers, but this time he warned them not to speak with Onkelos. Obedient to the Emperor's command, they took him into custody. When they were about to depart, Onkelos placed his hand on the mezuzah and laughed. They asked him, "Why are you laughing?" He replied, "Normally, a king is seated within while his servants guard him from without. This is not the case with God. His servants are within, while He guards them from without". The soldiers were so impressed at this that they too converted, after which Caesar sent no more soldiers!

There are many modern-day anecdotes demonstrating the power of the mezuzah and its deep significance. May we be inspired by the mezuzah, to allow it to enhance our identity and to feel the Almighty's protection in our everyday life.



Jewish Contemporary Ethics Part 39: Medical Ethics 1 – The Value of Life

by Rabbi Dr. Moshe Freedman, New West End Synagogue



The next section of this series will analyse four general themes which are fundamental to Jewish medical ethics. While these articles are designed to give an overview of principles and not to deal with complex

examples or to serve as a halachic guide, there will inevitably be some discussion of specific cases. However, any personal questions about medical ethics should be posed to a rabbinic authority, alongside professional medical care, since every case is complex, nuanced and unique. These articles should not serve as authoritative regarding practical law.

The four themes are: (i) the primacy of life; (ii) the obligation to save others; (iii) whether unnecessary medical procedures are permitted; (iv) issues pertaining to the end of life.

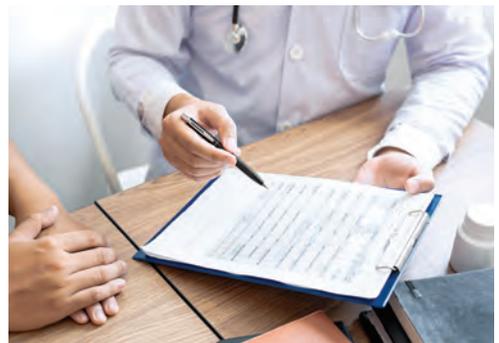
The principle of saving life, known as *pikuach nefesh*, is paramount in Judaism. Saving a life takes priority over all other commandments, except for the three cardinal sins of idolatry, murder and illicit relationships (Talmud Sanhedrin 74a). This means, for example, that one is obligated to break Shabbat if there is a concern that someone's life is at risk. The source for this is the verse: "You shall therefore keep my statutes and my ordinances; which a person shall do **and live by them**. I am the Lord". The Talmud comments that this means one should "live by the commandments, and not die by them" (Yoma 85a-b).

The primacy of life is also highlighted by the famous Talmudic adage: "one who saves a life is considered to have saved an entire world" (Mishnah Sanhedrin 4:9). When there is a justified, genuine and immediate concern for someone's life, Rabbi Shimon ben Tzemach Duran (1361-1444) rules that no expert –

medical or halachic – should be consulted, lest treatment be delayed.

Professor of Medicine at Mount Sinai School of Medicine in New York, and expert on Medical Ethics, Dr. Fred Rosner, recalled his first Shabbat working as a hospital doctor in approximately 1960. Upon hearing his name paged over the loudspeaker, he described running down eight flights of stairs and across the street to where the telephone operators were located, in order to avoid using the nearest phone (which ordinarily would be forbidden on Shabbat), only to find that he was needed on the sixth floor of the building he had just come from.

He writes: "this kind of activity continued throughout that Shabbat. On Saturday night, I was totally exhausted and called Rabbi Moshe Feinstein (1895-1986), who emphatically told me that I had done the wrong thing. I should have picked up the nearest telephone and responded to the call because it might have been an emergency. 'But 99 calls out of 100 are not emergencies', I protested. 'Even if only one out of 100 calls is a real emergency', replied Rabbi Feinstein, 'you must answer all 100, because you do not know which call will be that emergency'" (*Journal of Halacha in Contemporary Society* 20:48-49).



The History of Jewish Philosophy: Part Three – Rorschach, the Rambam and the Misappropriation of Maimonides

by Rabbi Chaim Burman, US Rabbinic Fellow



Hermann Rorschach, the early 20th century psychoanalyst, is famous for having developed the “Rorschach Inkblot Test”. This is a psychological personality test, where inkblot stained paper is

shown to a person undergoing the test, who then has to describe what the splattering of ink looks like to them. The theory is that people project their own views onto the world they see around them, interpreting what they see according to their own personal focus and fixations. For example, a person who is people-orientated might well find a face within the ink-blot.

The Rambam (Maimonides 1135-1204) has been likened to a Rorschach ink-blot test. He is a character who has been viewed and presented in totally different lights, depending on who is assessing him. There is a good reason for this. The Rambam was proficient and ground-breaking in many fields of Jewish thought. Some saw him as the Talmudic analyst par-excellence, as demonstrated by his mastery of the Talmud in the Commentary to the Mishnah and *Mishneh Torah* work on Jewish law. Pointing to this latter work, others saw him as the senior halachic authority who, with masterful coherence, juxtaposed novel interpretations alongside long-established ones. For others, he was the philosopher of Judaism, the author of *The Guide to the Perplexed* (*Moreh Nevuchim*), where he showed his ability to synthesise and explicate Jewish thought through general philosophical methods of analysis and to respond to the intellectual climate of his times. To the Yemenite community, for whom he interceded directly, he was a Jewish statesman, immensely dedicated to the welfare of his people and an advocate for international Jewish causes.

These interpretations are all plausible, since Maimonides was indeed an outstanding and seminal figure in so many areas within the Jewish tradition. There is, however, one school of

thought, which, though it focused greatly on Maimonides’ philosophical teachings in *Guide for the Perplexed*, created a portrayal of him which he himself would have been very surprised to hear.

The 1810s-1830s were a period of change for the Jews of Germany. The newly emerging communities of ‘men of letters’, a Jewish intelligentsia aside from the rabbinate, and the prospects of emancipation and civil equality combined to encourage some wealthy elements of the community to begin a process which they described as the “sanitisation” of Judaism. Significant, controversial innovations in synagogue appearance and worship were made, such as the introduction of German-language hymns and organs into the Shabbat service to make it more “amenable” to contemporary mores. At the same time, Jewish practices which were considered out-dated or irrational were purged. References in the siddur to a return to Jerusalem were removed, as these were deemed parochial and unpatriotic.

These innovations were too radical to be advocated without some kind of identifiable precedent in Jewish history. The figurehead for these proponents of these innovations was held up to be Maimonides, despite their being no precedents in his behaviour or writings to suggest him as such a proponent. Yet, based on his



Rorschach Inkblot Test

(continued on page 6)

The History of Jewish Philosophy: Part Three (continued from page 5)

writings in the *Guide for the Perplexed*, they portrayed this great sage as someone who was sympathetic to innovation even outside of the framework of halacha. For example, Maimonides' suggestion that God's requirement for the Temple offerings was in part a concession to mankind's base nature and psychological shortcomings was seen as a justification for omitting references to offerings in their new siddur; they portrayed Temple offerings as barbaric and uncivilised. For these people, the Rambam was an attractive figure to associate with, especially as he was also a noted philosopher within Western thought.

As the 19th century progressed, suggested changes became more radical. Some argued that circumcision should be abolished as a "barbaric rite" and Shabbat should be moved to Sunday. Their selective presentation of Maimonides to promote their own agenda is described by contemporary German-Israeli academic George Kohler (from Bar Ilan University) in the following terms:

"the reception [of the *Guide*] was turned into a selective, creative and idealised reinterpretation of the *Guide* for contemporary purposes in a way that Maimonides himself would hardly have recognised".

A cursory familiarity with the breadth of Maimonides' writings shows him to be a figure of devotion to his faith and tradition, far from the persona that some created. For example, returning to the issue of the offerings, rabbinic commentators have long emphasised the need to nuance our understanding of the Rambam's perspective in *The Guide* by comparing his treatment of the subject in his halachic work, where he describes offerings as a spiritual goal in themselves, subject to no expediency.

Within his legislative works and intercessions for the contemporary Jewish community, many of which have come to us as letters, the Rambam left his legacy as a seminal and dynamic thinker who could successfully present traditional Jewish thought and practice in a relevant and engaging way.

An Introduction to South American Jewry Part 2: The First Jewish Settlement in the Americas

by Dayan Elimelech Vanzetta, Rabbinical and Halachic Administrator for US Burial, Lecturer for US in the City



Brazil had been colonised by New Christians (Jews forced to convert to Christianity by the King of Portugal and the Inquisition). Due to the Portuguese Inquisition, the Jewish faith itself had been banned.

This changed in 1635 when the Dutch invaded and seized Recife (capital of the state of Pernambuco in northeastern Brazil) and allowed freedom of religion, which led many Jews to come to South America.

In Recife, the Jews entered into the sugar trade, which they soon came to dominate. For example, during the rule of Count Maurice of Nassau,

they controlled 40% of sugar exports from Pernambuco to the Netherlands and Germany.

They also built the *Kahal Zur Israel* Synagogue, the first synagogue in the whole of the Americas, which still stands today as a museum and is visited by tourists from around the world.

However, after the expulsion of the Dutch in 1654, the Jewish community in Pernambuco again suffered religious persecution by the Inquisition and left Brazil. Many settled in New Amsterdam, which would later become New York City.

Answer: their clothing lasted for 40 years without wearing out or deteriorating

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THE TRIBE SCRIBE

EIKEY: PRAYER POWER!

WE LEARN THE **MITZVAH** OF **PRAYER** FROM THIS WEEK'S **PARASHA** BUT WHEN IT COMES TO THE DETAILS, THE STORY OF **CHANA** GIVES US GREAT OF INSIGHT INTO PRAYER POINTS.

PRAY TELL! JOIN US AS WE WHIZ BACK THOUSANDS OF YEARS TO THE TIME OF THE **NEVIIM** (PROPHETS) TO HEAR ABOUT **CHANA** AND HER POWERFUL PRAYER.



Chana was extremely sad. She was married to **Elkanah** for many years and didn't have any children. She decided to go to the **Mishkan** (Tabernacle) when they were in **Shiloh** and pour out her heart to God.

Chana prayed and prayed. She promised that if she had a son, she would dedicate his life to God. She was so overwhelmed with emotions that she did not speak out loud. She prayed silently, only her lips moved.

Eli, the **Kohen Gadol**, saw her silently murmuring, thought she was drunk and told her off.



NO, I AM NOT DRUNK, I AM A WOMAN IN GREAT DISTRESS - I HAVE JUST POURED OUT MY HEART TO GOD.

Chana's prayers were answered, she was blessed with a child, **Shmuel** (Samuel). Chana's style of prayer was so powerful, that it became the way that all Jews have prayed the **Amidah** prayer ever since.



Eli realised he made a mistake.

GO IN PEACE. MAY GOD ANSWER YOUR PRAYERS!



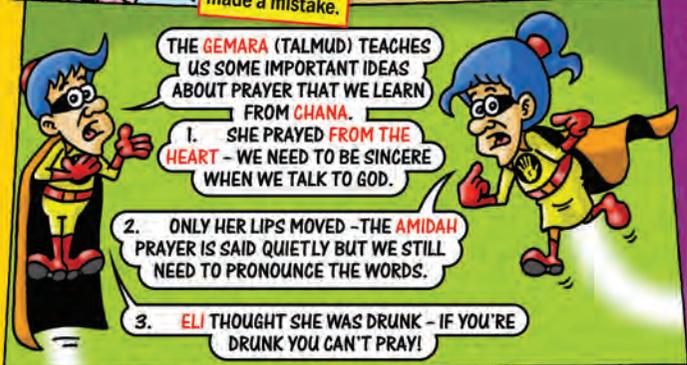
THE **GEMARA** (TALMUD) TEACHES US SOME IMPORTANT IDEAS ABOUT PRAYER THAT WE LEARN FROM **CHANA**.

1. SHE PRAYED **FROM THE HEART** - WE NEED TO BE SINCERE WHEN WE TALK TO GOD.

2. ONLY HER LIPS MOVED - THE **AMIDAH** PRAYER IS SAID QUIETLY BUT WE STILL NEED TO PRONOUNCE THE WORDS.

3. **Eli** THOUGHT SHE WAS DRUNK - IF YOU'RE DRUNK YOU CAN'T PRAY!

CHANA TEACHES US THAT WE CAN USE WHATEVER GOES ON IN OUR LIFE TO COME CLOSER TO GOD THROUGH PRAYER.



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